



E-Newsletter www.house.gov/simpson June 23, 2003



Equipment Operator Patrick Jenkins, a Seabee with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133, guards his fellow Seabees as they rebuild the Sarabadi bridge on the Tigris River near Al Hillah, Iraq, May 26, 2003. NMCB-133 is working to build bridges damaged during the war so that Iraqi citizens can use them once again. DoD photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Arlo K. Abrahamson, U.S. Navy.

What's Up this Week

For the week of June 23 to June 27, 2003

Tuesday

Congressman Simpson will meet with Mountain Home High School Senior Andy Hartman, who won this year's Congressional Art Contest, at 10 a.m. EDT. Thanks to free tickets from Southwest Airlines, Hartman, his parents and art teacher are in Washington, D.C. to attend the unveiling of his photo, "Mystic Canyon." To see Hartman's winning photo go to Simpson's webpage at <http://www.house.gov/simpson/students-artwinners2003.htm>.

Wednesday:

Simpson will attend Spanish class from 7 to 9 a.m. EDT in the U.S. Capitol. Simpson is one of 12 House members learning Spanish for 12 weeks. This is Simpson's fourth lesson. Simpson will vote on three appropriations bills: FY04 Labor, Health and Human Services, FY04 Interior, and FY04 Agriculture during a House Appropriations Committee mark up at 10 a.m. EDT in room 2359 Rayburn Building.

Thursday:

The House is scheduled to vote on the "Prescription Drug and Medicare Modernization Act of 2003." The bill would make prescription drugs an entitlement under Medicare.

Message from Mike

This week the House Appropriations Committee continues to vote on appropriations bills before sending them to the House floor. The Committee will be voting on 5 funding bills this week. The House is also taking up critical Medicare reform that will add a prescription drug benefit to the current Medicare system. This vote is expected to occur on Thursday. The House will then recess Friday for one week for the Independence work period. During this time I will be in Boise, Blackfoot and Pocatello.

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Weekly Website

June is National Home Owner's Month. Learn more:

<http://www.hud.gov>

Federal Facts

67.9 percent of Americans own a home according to the Census Bureau.

Idaho History Quiz

What Idaho town recently celebrated its centennial and is known as the birthplace of television?

Answer this question correctly and you'll be featured in next week's e-newsletter!

Last week's question: What Idaho city is home of the National Old Time Fiddlers' Contest?

Congratulations to Marilyn Rountree, a public school teacher from Jerome, who answered Weiser, Idaho!

Quote of the Week

"Everybody likes to go their own way--to choose their own time and manner of devotion." — Jane Austen, "Mansfield Park"

Simpson, Craig Author Buffer Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Idaho Senator Larry Craig and Congressman Mike Simpson have authored legislation making the federal government liable when forest fires destroy private property.

The "Enhanced Safety from Wildfire Act of 2003" provides private property owners recourse when the federal government doesn't properly manage its land. The bill encourages the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to create a "buffer zone" between federal and private land to protect non-federal land from forest fires.

The buffer zone would be determined by either the Secretary of Agriculture or the Secretary of Interior based on geography, topography and forest cover. Under the legislation, the buffer zone must be managed as "condition class one," which is the best land management practices with the lowest fire risk. If the buffer zone is not managed as condition class one and wildfire destroys private property outside the buffer zone, the federal government would be liable.

"The federal government should be a good neighbor," said Simpson. "When the federal government doesn't manage its land, it bears some responsibility to those who suffer damages as result of mismanagement. This bill simply encourages the government to proactively manage its land. If the government fails to do this, they should be liable."

The bill also addresses wildfire risk for commercial timber operations. Under the legislation, timber companies with 640 or more acres must prove their land was managed as condition class one to be eligible for compensation.

Delegation Welcomes Early Release of PILT

WASHINGTON, D.C. — As part of an accelerated payment schedule, Idaho's counties are now in receipt of millions of federal dollars from the federal government's Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program. Idaho's congressional delegation applauded the release of the funds by the Department of Interior. The funds compensate counties for non-taxable federal lands located within their boundaries. For fiscal year 2003, Idaho's counties will receive a total of more than \$15 million, which is a little over a million dollars more than last year's payment.

"Idaho's rural counties depend on PILT money to provide even the most basic services. Without PILT payments many communities struggle to operate public schools, maintain roads, and provide emergency services. I applaud the million dollar increase in PILT, but I believe the federal government is still not living up to its promise to provide adequate PILT funding. When some Idaho counties are more than 95 percent federally owned, PILT money is the only way they can survive," 2nd District Representative Mike Simpson said.

The PILT program was put into place in 1977, and is managed by the Bureau of Land Management, which holds responsibility for more than 264 million acres of public land throughout the country. Payments are made for BLM-administered lands, national forests, parks, and wildlife refuges; land used for federal water projects; and some military installations. For more information, go to: <http://www.blm.gov/pilt>.

Simpson Supports Military Construction, Homeland Security Funding Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Congressman Mike Simpson, a Member of the House Appropriations Committee, today joined his colleagues on the Committee in unanimously approving two separate bills to fund the Department of Homeland Security and Military Construction accounts.

The Military Construction Appropriations Bill provides \$9.19 billion in funding for military construction and family housing projects across the country. Under the House bill, Idaho's Mountain Home Air Force Base (MHAFB) would receive \$5.337 million for upgrades to its fitness center and \$37.126 million for 186 family housing units.

The Homeland Security Appropriations Bill provides \$29.4 billion for operations and activities of the Department of Homeland Security and represents a 1.8 percent increase over last year's enacted levels. The legislation provides \$4.4 billion in support of state programs and first responders, \$9 billion for border protection and related activities, \$5.172 billion for transportation security, and \$776 million for the protection of our nation's critical infrastructure.

"Perhaps the most important component of the funding contained within this bill is the realization that the federal government must engage the active participation of state and local governments, as well as the private sector, in developing its strategy to combat terrorism and increase security," said Simpson.

Homeland Security

This new section is dedicated to the issue of Homeland Security. You'll learn valuable tips on keeping your family safe and secure.

<http://www.ready.gov> is the Department of Homeland Security's website aimed at providing information on personal preparedness. When evaluating your family's needs, there are several things to consider. To make an emergency kit you'll need: food, fresh water, clean air and warmth. Here's some items to think about when storing food and water.

WATER



- One gallon of water per person per day, for drinking and sanitation.
- Children, nursing mothers, and sick people may need more water.
- If you live in a warm weather climate more water may be necessary.
- Store water tightly in clean plastic containers such as soft drink bottles.
- Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person.

FOOD



- Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food.
- Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water.
- Pack a manual can opener and eating utensils.
- Choose foods your family will eat.
- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
- Protein or fruit bars
- Dry cereal or granola
- Peanut butter
- Dried fruit
- Nuts
- Crackers
- Canned juices
- Non-perishable pasteurized milk
- High energy foods
- Vitamins
- Stress and comfort foods